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UNCLAS LAGOS 001871

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - HANDLE ACCORDINGLY

STATE FOR AF/W
STATE FOR INR/AA
STATE FOR EB/TRA/OTP DORIS HAYWOOD
STATE FOR OES/STC JULIE ROTTIER
STATE PASS DOC FOR KBURRESS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PGOV ECON EWWT NI

SUBJECT: COOPERATION ON MARITIME SAFETY AND SECURITY

¶11. (SBU) Summary. The National Maritime Authority (NMA) met with US Office of Naval Research Global team on December 6 to discuss mutual maritime safety and security cooperation and research. NMA Director General emphasized the need for USG assistance in training cadets, producing accurate coastal charts and maps, exchanging maritime safety intelligence, and improving search and rescue operations. End Summary.

¶12. (SBU) The USG team met NMA members at their Lagos headquarters on December 6 to gauge their interest in scientific research and maritime cooperation. NMA Director General Festus Ugwu said collaboration with the USG would be necessary to protect Nigeria's coastal waters and ensure the safety of vessels. He welcomed any USG assistance in improving NMA's effectiveness.

¶13. (SBU) NMA Maritime Safety Director Captain Ade Olopaenia said there were seven specific areas for mutual cooperation. These areas included: bathymetric surveys, geophysical surveys, search and rescue operations, maritime safety intelligence exchanges, training for hydrographic surveys, training cadets on U.S. navy vessels, and improving maritime chart mapping and production capabilities. DG Ugwu said NMA would welcome USG assistance in training personnel in developing and maintaining navigational charts. (Note: Most of their navigational charts date back to the 1960s. End note.)

¶14. (SBU) DG Ugwu said NMA would establish a Maritime Rescue Coordination Center by April 2005 and work with the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) to coordinate search and rescue operations for land, air, and sea. The Center would be based in Lagos and serve as a hub for regional maritime cooperation, Ugwu said. He supported regional and USG cooperation in maritime data research and intelligence exchanges.

¶15. (SBU) Comment: DG Ugwu appeared sincere in his desire to open communication channels with the USG. The positive response from NMA officials to maritime cooperation appeared to be aligned with U.S. Navy and EUCOM objectives. End Comment.

This cable has been cleared by U.S. Office of Naval Research Global Associate Director Melissa Flagg and Commander Naval Forces Europe/Commander Sixth Fleet Senior Adviser John Mittleman.

BROWNE